

[DISCUSSION DRAFT]

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To promote and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities for members of the Armed Forces and veterans on Federal recreational lands.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To promote and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities for members of the Armed Forces and veterans on Federal recreational lands.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Military and Veterans  
5 in Parks (MVP) Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ADAPTIVE TRAILS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNI-**  
2 **TIES FOR MILITARY SERVICEMEMBERS AND**  
3 **VETERANS.**

4 (a) ADAPTIVE TRAILS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after  
6 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
7 concerned shall select a location to develop at least  
8 one adaptive trail—

9 (A) on land managed by the Forest Service  
10 in each region of the Forest Service;

11 (B) on land managed by the National Park  
12 Service in each region of the National Park  
13 Service; and

14 (C) on land managed by the Bureau of  
15 Land Management in each region of the Bu-  
16 reau of Land Management.

17 (2) DEVELOPMENT.—In developing an adaptive  
18 trail under paragraph (1), the Secretary con-  
19 cerned—

20 (A) may—

21 (i) create a new adaptive trail;

22 (ii) modify an existing trail into an  
23 adaptive trail; or

24 (iii) create an adaptive trail from a  
25 combination of new and existing trails; and

26 (B) shall—

1 (i) consult with stakeholders with re-  
2 spect to the feasibility and resources nec-  
3 essary for completing the adaptive trail;  
4 and

5 (ii) to the maximum extent prac-  
6 ticable, use dirt or natural surface trails  
7 for the adaptive trail.

8 (3) COMPLETION.—Not later than 5 years after  
9 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
10 concerned, in coordination with stakeholders con-  
11 sulted with under paragraph (2)(B), shall complete  
12 each adaptive trail developed under paragraph (1).

13 (4) MAPS, SIGNAGE, AND PROMOTIONAL MATE-  
14 RIALS.—For each adaptive trail developed under  
15 paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall—

16 (A) publish and distribute maps, install  
17 signage, and issue promotional materials; and

18 (B) coordinate with stakeholders to lever-  
19 age any non-Federal resources necessary for the  
20 development, stewardship, or completion of the  
21 adaptive trail.

22 (5) CONFLICT AVOIDANCE WITH OTHER  
23 USES.—In developing each adaptive trail under  
24 paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall ensure  
25 that the adaptive trail—

1 (A) does not conflict with—

2 (i) the uses in effect before the date  
3 of the enactment of this Act with respect  
4 to any trail or road that is part of that  
5 adaptive trail;

6 (ii) multiple-use areas where biking,  
7 hiking, horseback riding, or use by pack  
8 and saddle stock are existing uses on the  
9 date of the enactment of this Act; or

10 (iii) the purposes for which any trail  
11 is established under the National Trails  
12 System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241 et seq.); and

13 (B) complies with all applicable land use  
14 and management plans of the Federal rec-  
15 reational lands on which the adaptive trail is lo-  
16 cated.

17 (5) REPORT.—Not later than 6 years after the  
18 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary con-  
19 cerned, in partnership with stakeholders and other  
20 interested organizations, shall prepare and publish a  
21 report that lists the adaptive trails developed under  
22 this subsection.

23 (b) ADAPTIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after  
25 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary

1 concerned shall select a location to develop at least  
2 one adaptive recreation opportunity—

3 (A) on land managed by the Forest Service  
4 in each region of the Forest Service;

5 (B) on land managed by the National Park  
6 Service in each region of the National Park  
7 Service; and

8 (C) on land managed by the Bureau of  
9 Land Management in each region of the Bu-  
10 reau of Land Management.

11 (2) DEVELOPMENT.—In developing each adapt-  
12 ive recreation opportunity under paragraph (1), the  
13 Secretary concerned shall consult with stakeholders  
14 with respect to the feasibility and resources nec-  
15 essary for completing the adaptive recreation oppor-  
16 tunity.

17 (3) ADAPTIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES.—  
18 The adaptive recreation opportunities developed  
19 under paragraph (1) may include improving accessi-  
20 bility or access to—

21 (A) campgrounds and camping areas;

22 (B) hunting, fishing, shooting, or archery  
23 ranges or locations;

24 (C) snow activities, including skiing and  
25 snowboarding;

1 (D) water activities, including kayaking,  
2 paddling, canoeing, and boat launches;

3 (E) rock climbing;

4 (F) biking; and

5 (G) any other recreation opportunities  
6 identified in consultation with stakeholders  
7 under paragraph (2).

8 (4) COMPLETION.—Not later than 5 years after  
9 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
10 concerned, in coordination with stakeholders con-  
11 sulted with under paragraph (2), shall complete each  
12 adaptive recreation opportunity developed under  
13 paragraph (1).

14 (5) MAPS, SIGNAGE, AND PROMOTIONAL MATE-  
15 RIALS.—For each adaptive recreation opportunity  
16 developed under paragraph (1), the Secretary con-  
17 cerned shall—

18 (A) publish and distribute maps, install  
19 signage, and issue promotional materials; and

20 (B) coordinate with stakeholders to lever-  
21 age any non-Federal resources necessary for the  
22 development, stewardship, or completion of the  
23 adaptive recreation opportunity.

24 (6) CONFLICT AVOIDANCE WITH OTHER  
25 USES.—In developing each adaptive recreation op-

1 opportunity under paragraph (1), the Secretary con-  
2 cerned shall ensure that the adaptive recreation op-  
3 portunity—

4 (A) does not conflict with—

5 (i) the uses in effect before the date  
6 of the enactment of this Act with respect  
7 to any Federal recreational lands on which  
8 the adaptive recreation opportunity is lo-  
9 cated; or

10 (ii) multiple-use areas in existence on  
11 the date of the enactment of this Act; and

12 (B) complies with all applicable land use  
13 and management plans of the Federal rec-  
14 reational lands on which the adaptive rec-  
15 reational opportunity is located.

16 (7) REPORT.—Not later than 6 years after the  
17 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary con-  
18 cerned, in partnership with stakeholders and other  
19 interested organizations, shall prepare and publish a  
20 report that lists the adaptive recreation opportuni-  
21 ties developed under this subsection.

22 (c) ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT RENTALS.—In carrying  
23 out subsections (a) and (b), the Secretary concerned may  
24 enter into partnerships, contracts, or agreements with  
25 other Federal, State, Tribal, local, or private entities to

1 make adaptive equipment available to rent on Federal rec-  
2 reational lands.

3 (d) PROMOTING ADAPTIVE RECREATION.—Not later  
4 than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act,  
5 the Secretary concerned shall—

6 (1) inventory all existing adaptive trails and  
7 adaptive recreation opportunities on Federal recre-  
8 ation lands; and

9 (2) make information about such trails and op-  
10 portunities available (including through the use of  
11 prominently displayed links) on public websites of—

12 (A) each of the Federal land management  
13 agencies; and

14 (B) each relevant unit and subunit of the  
15 Federal land management agencies.

16 **SEC. 3. PROMOTION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION FOR MILI-**  
17 **TARY SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS.**

18 Each Secretary concerned, in coordination with the  
19 Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of De-  
20 fense, shall develop educational and public awareness ma-  
21 terials to disseminate to members of the Armed Forces  
22 and veterans, on—

23 (1) opportunities for members of the Armed  
24 Forces and veterans to access Federal recreational  
25 land free of charge under section 805 of the Federal



1 Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (Public Law  
2 108–447; 118 Stat. 3385; 16 U.S.C. 6804);

3 (2) the availability and location of adaptive  
4 trails, including new adaptive trails developed and  
5 completed under section 2(a);

6 (3) the availability and location of adaptive  
7 recreation opportunities, including new adaptive  
8 recreation opportunities developed and completed  
9 under section 2(b);

10 (4) adaptive equipment assistance pursuant to  
11 section 1151(c) of title 38, United States Code;

12 (5) outdoor-related volunteer and wellness pro-  
13 grams;

14 (6) the benefits of outdoor recreation for phys-  
15 ical and mental health;

16 (7) resources to access guided outdoor trips and  
17 other outdoor programs connected to the Depart-  
18 ment of Defense, the Department of Veterans Af-  
19 fairs, the Department of the Interior, or the Depart-  
20 ment of Agriculture; and

21 (8) programs and jobs focused on continuing  
22 national service such as Public Land Corps,  
23 AmeriCorps, and conservation corps programs.

1 **SEC. 4. REDUCING RED TAPE FOR RECREATION OPPORTU-**  
2 **NITIES.**

3 (a) **FEE RELIEF.**—Section 803(d) of the Federal  
4 Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6802(d))  
5 is amended by adding at the end the following:

6 “(5) **MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND**  
7 **VETERANS RECREATION USES.**—

8 “(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall  
9 not charge a standard amenity recreation fee,  
10 expanded amenity recreation fee, or special  
11 recreation permit fee for the following:

12 “(i) Any member of the Armed Forces  
13 or dependent of a member of the Armed  
14 Forces who provides adequate proof of eli-  
15 gibility as determined by the Secretary.

16 “(ii) Any veteran who provides ade-  
17 quate proof of military service as deter-  
18 mined by the Secretary.

19 “(iii) Any member of a Gold Star  
20 Family who meets the eligibility require-  
21 ments of section 3.2 of Department of De-  
22 fense Instruction 1348.36 (or a successor  
23 instruction).

24 “(B) **APPLICABILITY.**—This paragraph ap-  
25 plies to each special recreation permit applica-  
26 tion submitted after the date of the enactment

1 of the Military and Veterans in Parks (MVP)  
2 Act.

3 “(C) APPLICABILITY OF EXISTING LAWS.—  
4 A special recreation permit applicant otherwise  
5 exempted from fees under subparagraph (A) is  
6 subject to all other laws, regulations, and poli-  
7 cies regarding the application, issuance and exe-  
8 cution of special recreation permits.”.

9 (b) PERMIT STREAMLINING.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-  
11 graph (2), and subject to any terms and conditions  
12 determined to be appropriate by the Secretary con-  
13 cerned, the Secretary concerned shall issue a special  
14 recreation permit to a veterans organization for the  
15 use of Federal recreational land if—

16 (A) use of the Federal recreational land by  
17 the general public is not subject to a limited  
18 entry permit system; and

19 (B) capacity is available for the times or  
20 days in which the proposed activity or event is  
21 to be carried out.

22 (2) PERMIT WAIVERS.—

23 (A) SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT.—The  
24 Secretary concerned shall not require a special  
25 recreation permit under paragraph (1) for a

1 recreation activity or event conducted by a vet-  
2 erans organization if the Secretary concerned  
3 determines, based on the review of a proposal,  
4 that—

5 (i) the proposed activity or event to be  
6 undertaken would have only nominal ef-  
7 fects on Federal recreational lands, re-  
8 sources, and programs; and

9 (ii) establishing additional terms and  
10 conditions for the proposed activity or  
11 event is not necessary to protect or avoid  
12 conflict on or with Federal recreational  
13 lands, resources, and programs.

14 (B) PICNIC AREAS.—The Secretary con-  
15 cerned shall not require a veterans organization  
16 to obtain a permit or reservation for a picnic  
17 area on Federal recreational land if the Sec-  
18 retary concerned does not require the general  
19 public to obtain a permit or reservation to ac-  
20 cess the picnic area.

21 (3) EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN ALLOCATIONS  
22 OF USE.—If the Secretary concerned allocates visitor  
23 use-days available for an area or activity on Federal  
24 recreational lands among recreation service providers  
25 that hold a special recreation permit, such allocation

1 of visitor-use days shall not apply to an organized  
2 group activity or event special recreation permit sub-  
3 mitted by a veterans organization.

4 (4) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this sub-  
5 section prevents the Secretary concerned from lim-  
6 iting or abating issuance of a special recreation per-  
7 mit based on resource conditions or safety issues.

8 **SEC. 5. PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE MILITARY AND VET-**  
9 **ERAN RECREATION.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary concerned shall  
11 seek to enter into partnerships or agreements with State,  
12 Tribal, local, or private entities with expertise in outdoor-  
13 related volunteer and wellness programs for members of  
14 the Armed Forces or veterans.

15 (b) PARTNERSHIPS.—As part of a partnership or  
16 agreement entered into under subsection (a), the Sec-  
17 retary concerned may host events on Federal recreational  
18 lands designed to promote outdoor recreation among mem-  
19 bers of the Armed Forces and veterans.

20 (c) FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—  
21 Under a partnership or agreement entered into pursuant  
22 to subsection (a), the Secretary concerned may provide fi-  
23 nancial or technical assistance to the entity with which  
24 the Secretary concerned has entered into the partnership  
25 or agreement to assist with the—

1           (1) the planning, development, and execution of  
2 events, activities, or programs designed to promote  
3 outdoor recreation for members of the Armed Forces  
4 or veterans; or

5           (2) the acquisition of adaptive equipment to fa-  
6 cilitate improved outdoor recreation opportunities for  
7 members of the Armed Forces or veterans.

8 **SEC. 6. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR MILITARY AND VETERAN**  
9 **RECREATION.**

10       (a) STRATEGY.—Not later than 1 year after the date  
11 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior  
12 and the Secretary of Agriculture, acting jointly, shall de-  
13 velop and make public a strategy to increase visits to Fed-  
14 eral recreational lands by members of the Armed Forces,  
15 veterans, and Gold Star Families.

16       (b) REQUIREMENTS.—A strategy developed under  
17 subsection (a)—

18           (1) shall—

19               (A) establish objectives and quantifiable  
20 targets for increasing visits to Federal rec-  
21 reational lands by members of the Armed  
22 Forces, veterans, and Gold Star Families;

23               (B) include an opportunity for public no-  
24 tice and comment;

1 (C) emphasize increased recreation oppor-  
2 tunities on Federal land for members of the  
3 Armed Forces, veterans, and Gold Star Fami-  
4 lies; and

5 (D) provide the anticipated costs to achieve  
6 the objectives and meet the targets established  
7 under subparagraph (B); and

8 (2) shall not establish any preference between  
9 similar recreation facilitated by noncommercial or  
10 commercial entities.

11 (c) UPDATE TO STRATEGY.—Not later than 5 years  
12 after the date of the publication of the strategy required  
13 under subsection (a), and every 5 years thereafter, the  
14 Secretaries shall update the strategy and make public the  
15 update.

16 **SEC. 7. RECREATION RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES.**

17 Section 804(d)(5) of the Federal Lands Recreation  
18 Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6803(d)(5)), is amended—

19 (1) in subparagraph (A) by striking “11” and  
20 inserting “12”; and

21 (2) in subparagraph (D)(ii)—

22 (A) by striking “Three” and inserting  
23 “Four”; and

24 (B) after subclause (III), by inserting the  
25 following:

1                                   “(IV) Veterans organizations, as  
2                                   such term is defined in section 9 of  
3                                   the Military and Veterans in Parks  
4                                   (MVP) Act.”.

5 **SEC. 8. CAREER AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR**  
6                                   **VETERANS.**

7           (a) **VETERAN HIRING.**—The Secretary concerned is  
8 strongly encouraged to hire veterans in all positions re-  
9 lated to the management of Federal recreational lands.

10          (b) **VOLUNTEERS.**—Not later than 2 years after the  
11 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned  
12 shall establish a new program or expand an existing pro-  
13 gram to recruit, train, and accept members of the Armed  
14 Forces and veterans as volunteers on Federal recreational  
15 lands to assist with—

- 16                   (1) interpretive functions;
- 17                   (2) visitor services;
- 18                   (3) conservation measures and development;
- 19                   (4) recreation access;
- 20                   (5) trail construction or maintenance;
- 21                   (6) education uses (including outdoor classroom  
22 construction or maintenance); and
- 23                   (7) other activities related to outdoor recre-  
24 ation.



1           (c) OUTDOOR RECREATION PROGRAM ATTEND-  
2 ANCE.—Each Secretary of a military department is en-  
3 couraged to allow members of the Armed Forces on active  
4 duty status to participate in programs related to environ-  
5 mental stewardship or guided outdoor recreation.

6 **SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.**

7           In this Act:

8                   (1) ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT.—The term “adapt-  
9 ive equipment” means any tool, device, or machine  
10 designed to assist individuals with physical disabili-  
11 ties with participating in outdoor recreation activi-  
12 ties.

13                   (2) ADAPTIVE TRAIL.—The term “adaptive  
14 trail” means a continuous land-based route with  
15 characteristics (including trail width, surface, cross  
16 or running slope, surface firmness, and obstacle  
17 avoidance) that allow access for individuals with  
18 physical disabilities.

19                   (3) FEDERAL RECREATIONAL LAND.—The term  
20 “Federal recreational land” has the meaning given  
21 the term “Federal recreational lands and waters” in  
22 section 802(5) of the Federal Lands Recreation En-  
23 hancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6801(5)).

1           (4) GOLD STAR FAMILY.—The term “Gold Star  
2           Family” includes any individual described in section  
3           3.3 of Department of Defense Instruction 1348.36.

4           (5) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term “Sec-  
5           retary concerned” means—

6                   (A) the Secretary of the Interior, with re-  
7                   spect to lands under the jurisdiction of the Sec-  
8                   retary; and

9                   (B) the Secretary of Agriculture, with re-  
10                  spect to National Forest System lands.

11           (6) SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT.—The term  
12           “special recreation permit” means a special recre-  
13           ation permit described in paragraph (13)(A)(iii)(I)  
14           of section 802 of the Federal Lands Recreation En-  
15           hancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6801) (as amended by  
16           section 202(10)).

17           (7) VETERANS ORGANIZATION.—The term “vet-  
18           erans organization” means a recreation service pro-  
19           vider that predominantly serves members of the  
20           Armed Forces, veterans, or Gold Star Families.